

confederation, the ineffectiveness of the Ch'ing countermeasures appear little different in character from those involving an internal agrarian rebellion. The latter, after all, were also frequently led by groups ethnically and socially at odds with their surrounding society.

Earlier, Professor Murray argues that patron-client relationships, and homosexual relationships as well, provided an organizational bond between pirates among whom the lineage relationships of "normal" society were lacking. When she comes to discuss the final collapse of the pirate confederation in her conclusion, she demonstrates that the explanation for the pirates' ultimate failure does not lie in either military countermeasures of the government forces or the organization of the local *t'uan-lien* (militia) defense system, but rather in internal dissension that dissolved the patron-client relationships. The argument seems strained. Why did piracy not relapse into a lower level of intensity where patron-client relationships could continue to survive? The question points to another answer. The symbiotic balance between pirates and their prey in the water world was broken by the massive ascendancy of the pirate forces. Even during their early phase, Murray makes the pirates seem so powerful and effective that one wonders how those on whom they preyed survived at all. Once they carried all before them, their activities became counter-productive; the combination of protection and expropriation only worked when the victims could still absorb reasonable losses. The pirates' success came close to destroying the society and economy on which they depended for subsistence.

Still, Professor Murray elicits a number of patterns characterizing piracy — homosexuality as a bond among pirates, and the important role of women — observed also in piracy and maritime enterprise elsewhere. Her study helps us to understand that the South China Coast was not a sharp dividing line but a continuum from one sort of society, the more settled agrarian mode of the interior, to another, the fluctuating maritime world of the "inner seas". In conclusion, Professor Murray appropriately observes that the Mandate of Heaven was not restored over the water world in the nineteenth century. In fact, if the Ch'ing may have gained nothing by pirate suppression, neither did it lose something it once possessed. The Mandate of Heaven had never been fully implemented over this ambiguous region.

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Doreen Evenden Nagy — *Popular Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England*. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Press, 1988. Pp. 139.

This book purports to discuss popular medicine in the seventeenth century by focusing on several specific themes — the role of geography, economics and religion in perpetuating reliance on popular practitioners, the similarity between the treatments of popular practitioners and those of their educated counterparts, and the role of women in popular practice. But even the author's rather modest expectations to produce a "better informed, albeit somewhat altered perception of seventeenth-century English health care" (3) are not met by this study.

In a particularly telling phrase in the introduction, Nagy refers to her project as "this paper" (2). In fact, the book has the character of several related conference papers: each chapter begins with a minor quarrel with a prevalent thesis about medical history in England. (For example, in chapter one, Nagy objects to R.S. Powers' contention that professionalization occurred at the expense of popular practice); the modification or refutation of a particular thesis is then supported by extensive anecdotal evidence drawn predominantly from the letters and diaries of noble and gentle men and women and from medical texts; and finally, a rather obvious conclusion is reached. (For example, in chapter one, Nagy concludes that popular medicine persisted in the seventeenth century.) Each chapter, thus, exhibits the weaknesses of the conference paper as an academic genre: first, there is no attempt to define a methodological or analytic framework for the chapter. Instead, a brief discussion of the thesis of a secondary source in medical history is considered sufficient to define the approach and lay the methodological ground. As a result, each thesis functions as a straw man to be defeated by a mass of literary evidence. Secondly, the method of argumentation is to present a great many quotations and examples and let the evidence speak for itself. Finally, the conclusions Nagy reaches are neither novel nor particularly informative. They seem designed, as are the conclusions of many conference papers, simply to provoke further discussion. So "paper" is not a misappellation but rather an apt characterization.

The most disturbing aspect of this book is the weakness of its conclusions; they simply do not warrant such extensive discussion. For example, the conclusion of chapter two that popular practitioners were more accessible to the majority of the population than the limited number of physicians concentrated in the cities seems evident. The fourth chapter juxtaposes the remedies of doctors and popular practitioners in order to argue that the practices of both groups were essentially the same, a conclusion which does not, as Nagy seems to intend, really legitimate popular practice. Interestingly, Nagy does provide examples of medical recipes which moved from learned texts into popular texts and vice versa. In the fifth chapter, which claims to be a case study of women's role in Stuart medicine, Nagy actually demonstrates by her use of the records left by elite women that not all female practitioners were the traditional wise women or white witches, and that women were important to popular practice. However, in part because her sources are entirely literary and her examples almost exclusively drawn from gentlewomen, her chapter does not provide a case study of female medical practice. The limits of her case are perhaps most strikingly indicated by her complete neglect of midwifery, a fundamental part of female medical practice.

The least persuasive and least well-developed chapter in the book is the third, which contends that religious factors perpetuated popular medical practice. But this potentially interesting topic is reduced to the far narrower thesis that because many Englishmen believed that illness came from God, they also believed that consulting a doctor was futile. Her argument does not suggest, as she seems to assume, that the patient would then consult a popular practitioner. Furthermore, a belief in the ultimate resolution of disease as resting in the hands of God does not preclude seeking medical treatment. In fact, many of Nagy's specific examples discuss both the plague as caused by God and the most effective remedies and treatments (36). Her rather sketchy discussion of this issue does not deal in any comprehensive sense with the influence of religion on popular medicine.

While the treatment of medical issues in this book is problematic, its total detachment from the context of the seventeenth century is a much more serious failing. Nagy does not acknowledge that religious divisions or civil strife might have effected medical practice or medical perceptions; the English Civil War is not even mentioned. Nagy makes no distinctions about the practitioners of popular medicine or their patients on the basis of social class. She simply acknowledges that there are better primary sources available among the literate classes. No mention is made of the fact that some popular medical practitioners, women in particular, were charged with witchcraft in the seventeenth century.

Nagy's arbitrary definition of popular practitioners as unlicensed practitioners does not allow her to develop her topic effectively. She neglects whole categories of popular practitioners; midwives, a group with a license but still clearly popular practitioners, are not even mentioned, nor are empirics of any kind. Nor does she discuss the extent or kind of medical practice provided by the less educated and less regulated practitioners who, nonetheless, provided what can only be considered popular medical treatment: barbers, pharmacists and licensed empirics. As a result, her study indeed supports a conclusion that there were popular practitioners in the seventeenth century — and it is hard to imagine that anyone would dispute such a claim — but one has no idea what that means. There is no indication of who those people were (beyond the specific identification of the cited source), why they practiced, what their practices were (other than Nagy's argument that they were essentially the same as those of their better-educated counterparts), or why they used them. In other words, beyond the fact that Nagy can support a conclusion that these people practiced medicine, she gives no indication of how they understood their role in medical practice to be. In fact, her study tends to simply document the practice of elite women who were sought out by their families and their friends for medical advice. As such, it cannot claim to present anything but this very narrow segment of popular practice.

It is difficult to imagine an appropriate audience for this book. The Tudor-Stuart historian would find nothing beyond familiar names and sources which would allow him to explicitly connect Nagy's discussion of popular medicine with the seventeenth century. Even the most Whiggish medical historian who might eulogize the educated medical practitioner is nonetheless sufficiently aware of the persistence of popular medical practice (even though he or she might too vociferously deplored it) to be spared these obvious arguments about the reasons of its persistence. Because the book is remote from the seventeenth-century context of medical practice and because it is methodologically structured as a response to current polemics in medical history, it is not appropriate as an introductory text about popular medicine. In fact, this is not a study which tells one very much about popular medicine. It instead provides evidence for obvious reasons why popular medical treatments were sought — availability, lower cost, religious considerations —, and demonstrates that women are involved in these activities. These conclusions do not warrant the wealth of specific evidence Nagy provides.

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